

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. : 10/710,055 Confirmation No : 4054  
Applicants : Scott Heiferman et al.  
Filed : June 15, 2004  
Title : **A System and a Method for Organizing Real-World Group Gatherings Around a Topic of Interest**  
Group Art Unit : 3629  
Examiner : Jonathan P. Ouellette  
Customer No. : 28289

Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.132**

1. I am the Chief Executive Officer and a co-founder of Meetup, Inc., the Assignee of the above-identified patent application, and am therefore qualified to speak on the commercial success and industry needs that are met by the claimed invention.

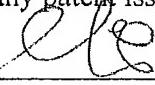
2. The claimed invention, as embodied by the currently pending independent claims, has been successfully commercialized by Meetup to create one of the world's largest network of local groups. The claimed invention is conducive to bringing together individuals who share similar interests in similar geographic areas. A third-party description of the claimed invention is set forth in the articles of Exhibit A. Meetup was founded with the mission of revitalizing local community and helping people around the world self-organize. Since its inception, Meetup has successfully commercialized the claimed invention to enable individuals to organize a local group or find an existing local group to engage in real world face-to-face interaction. The claimed invention covers a wide range of diverse interests and geographic areas, as is demonstrated by the various topics on the site's front page, <http://www.meetup.com>. The claimed invention facilitates groups such as the Manhattan Boston Terrier Owners Group, the Hyderabad, India Outdoor Adventure Club, the Vancouver, Canada Klingon Language Group, which are discussed in the articles of Exhibit B. The claimed invention was recognized for its grassroots organization capabilities, as evidenced by it allowing about 190,000 individuals to get together with fellow supporters months prior to the 2004 Iowa caucuses (*See Newsweek* article of Exhibit C). The claimed invention also complements other social networking technology, such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, but expands on their on-line aspects by providing

sophisticated tools for creating and managing off-line, real-life, in-person interaction between individuals. For example, as recently described in a *Fortune* article of Exhibit C, Meetup has developed a technology that enables any third-party website to embed a widget that can be used by visitors to that third-party website to self-organize and create events, thereby further expanding the social networking spectrum.

3. The claimed invention, as embodied by the currently pending independent claims, was first commercialized in June of 2002 as a website publicly accessible at <http://www.meetup.com>. The website has around 16 million visitors per month and over 7.5 million members. At present, the website offers groups in around 6,200 cities and members in around 49,000 cities (equated to "geographic locales" in the claimed invention). There are around 80,000 groups (equated to "chapters" in the claimed invention) that cover the aforementioned topics with respect to one or more geographic locales. There are around 240,000 monthly meet-ups (equated to "in-person gatherings" in the claimed invention) with around 2.5 million RSVPs placed each month by members for corresponding meet-ups. The claimed invention provides for revenue streams derived from various sponsorship opportunities associated with the Meetup.com website or the meetups. Meetup, Inc., operating the claimed invention, as commercially embodied, currently employs approximately 65 staff members.

4. The claimed invention, as embodied by the currently pending independent claims, has been recognized by the industry via various awards attributed to it (See Exhibit D). For example, in 2004, the claimed invention was recognized with the Webby Award in the area of web politics. Specifically, the claimed invention was recognized for its ability to efficiently organize political gatherings or other social awareness events. Also in 2004, Scott Heiferman, CEO, co-founder of Meetup, Inc., and co-inventor of the claimed invention was awarded the MIT Innovator of the Year award with respect to the claimed invention. The claimed invention was listed on *Time* magazine's list of the "50 Best Websites of 2004." The current and future potential of the claimed invention has been recognized by preeminent venture capital investors and leading internet companies such as eBay.com who have purchased significant equity interests in Meetup, Inc. in 2006 (See *Bloomberg Businessweek* article of Exhibit D).

5. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements are made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment or both, under § 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

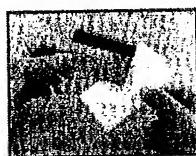
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Heiferman  
Chief Executive Officer of Meetup, Inc.

10/5/10  
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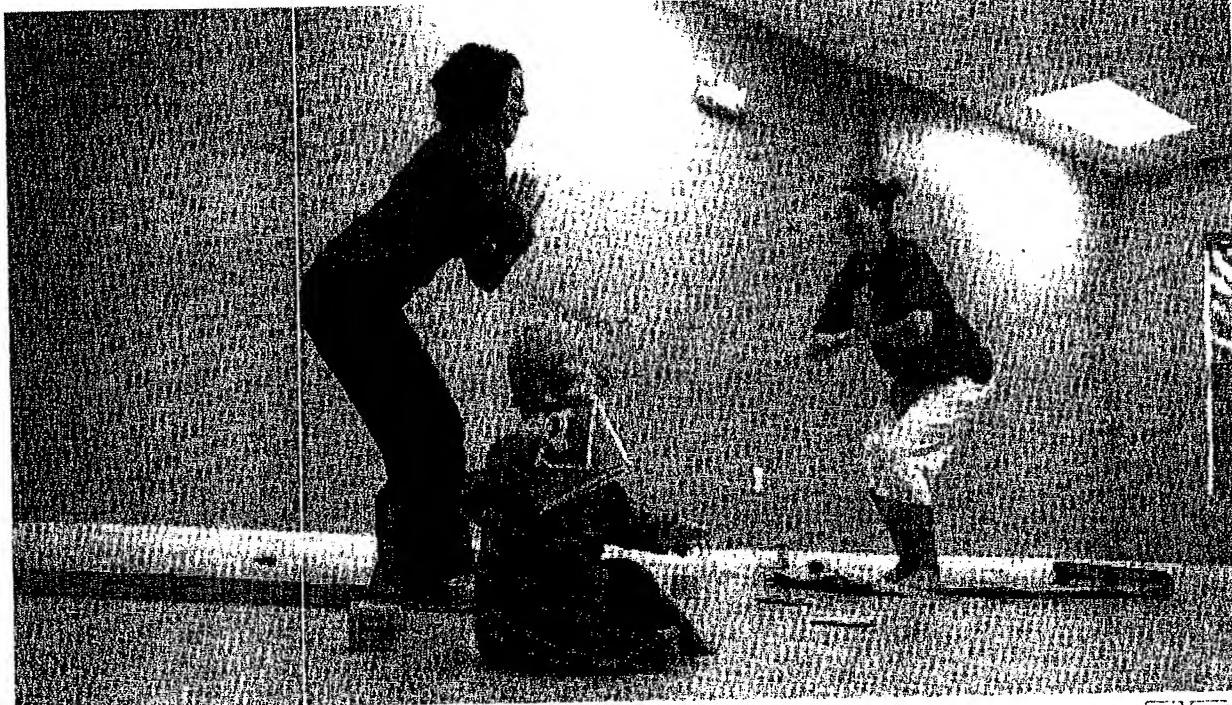
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## Meetup.com encourages face-to-face interaction

Local Bay Area Meetups break the electronic barrier

USF MMJ: Shana Johnson



Wesley Williams occupies himself while his mother, Sara Williams, and Abby Eastman strike a yoga pose while attending a Yoga Parents Meetup in Riverview.

< >

By ALEXIS CHAMBERLAIN and NELSON VAZQUEZ

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Published: March 3, 2010

Updated 04/09/2010 04:28 pm

Tampa - Most people start their day with a cup of coffee and rush-hour traffic, but former photography teacher Jeff Donald spends his mornings chatting with friends and taking photo walks.

Finding a happy medium between "new school" technology and "old school" socializing, sites such as Meetup.com, Tweetups.org and Facebook's events pages offer ways for people to find out about events in their communities with the intention of face-to-face interaction.

In between shooting as a professional photographer, Donald runs three groups through Meetup.com: the North Pinellas Photography Forum, the Tampa Photography Forum and Tampa Adventure Photo Tours. The groups have more than 800 members who meet 30 to 40 times a month.

"I discovered Meetup.com by accident and, in many respects, it's sort of changed the direction of my life," said Donald, who found the site while helping his wife look for some activities. "It's almost a full-time job organizing and actually leading and running the events. I do it all through Meetup because it offers so many more opportunities as far as marketing and publicity."

Inspired by the book "Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community" by Robert Putnam, Meetup.com was created in 2001 to encourage social interaction. It has 6.1 million members and 180,000 monthly Meetups in more than 45,000 cities based on 28,000 topics.

"What's good about sites like Meetup.com is that it's not primarily a virtual group," said Joseph Vandello, a professor of psychology at the University of South Florida. "They bring people together that otherwise wouldn't interact. It's just a starting point for real-life interaction."

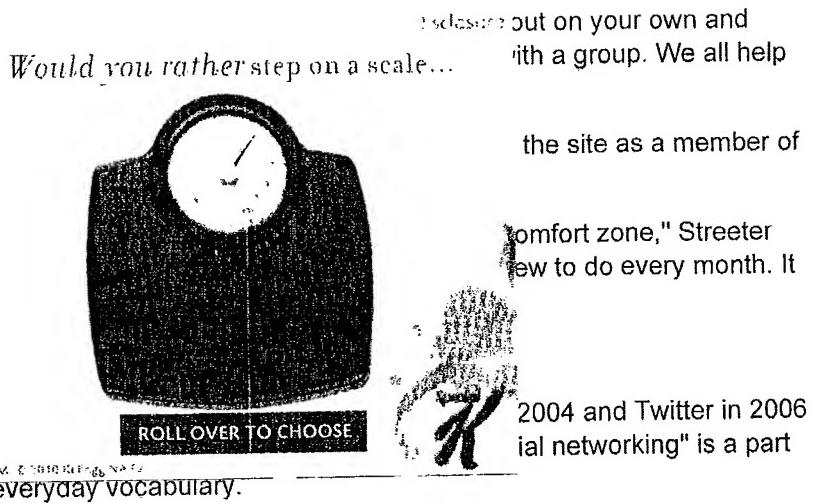
Meetup.com allows users to search by ZIP code and interest, generating a list of events within a 100-mile radius. Meetup topics vary, but can be as specific as the New York Jets Fan Club of Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County Conservatives or Tampa Bay Clicker Trainers, for example.

Former teacher Maria Chapin has been with Donald's group since its start in 2008.

"I think sites like Meetup are a fabulous idea. In the past, if you wanted social interaction, you had to go out and find a club to join -- groups and events like these just weren't as available as they are through the Internet today," said Chapin, a member of Donald's North Pinellas Photography Forum and Tampa Adventure Photo Tours. "I think, with

## RELATED LINKS

- [Meetup.com Photo Gallery](#)
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- [Video: Meet ups](#)
- [Anatomy of a Meetup](#)



"Social media has its advantages and disadvantages, but it does help to create communities in new ways," said USF mass communications professor Kelli Burns, a social media expert. "Meetup allows people to find people who would never find each other in the regular world. It's begun to change interpersonal communication."

Donald views that change positively.

"What my group has enabled is I can now tap into the wealth of members and people who share a like interest," said Donald, who is planning photo tours to Kenya and Yellowstone National Park.

Bruce Sharp, organizer of Tampa Scuba Diving Group, found the site through a friend and has been running his group for four years.

"Amazing things can happen when a group of people get together who share a common interest," said Sharp, whose group meets several times a month. "In our busy times, we all too often put work in front of everything else and it makes it difficult to meet people and follow the things we enjoy."

Sharp's favorite part of his group is taking people to new dive sites and seeing his members become skilled divers.

Facebook has started a new trend in RSVPing for an event -- people have begun to base head counts off of the "attending," "maybe attending" and "not attending" portions of an event's page.

"Using Facebook events to let friends become aware of activities is a good recruiting tool," said Daniel Gonzalez, social chair of USF's Mexican American Student Association, who uses Facebook to organize and promote its events. "Since everyone uses social media from day to day, it's just easier to use Facebook to connect with friends."

Tweetups.org, an events networking site of Twitter users, focuses on careers, encouraging people to make new contacts within their field and enhance their career by networking over drinks.

"The danger with the Internet today is that people get too comfortable with virtual interaction and never want to leave their living room, but I do think sites like Meetup are the best of both worlds — it allows you to find someone locally who may share the same interests as yourself," said Vandello. "You know, for instance, if you're into dressing your cat up like a Star Trek character, you'll find someone else out there that does the same — it brings people together."

**Alexis Chamberlain and Nelson Vazquez are multimedia journalism students at the University of South Florida.**

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## Columbians get involved with meetup.com

Sunday, July 5, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT; updated 4:32 p.m. CDT, Sunday, July 5, 2009



Members of Coffee and Games and More, a Meetup group, share a laugh as they try out the board game Rummikub for the first time June 27 at It's a Grind coffee shop. From left are Christine Goyette, Pamela You, Colleen Brown, Kate Brown and Greg Leonard. The group has been meeting and playing games since November. "We always laugh so much, we always have fun," Leonard said. | [VIVIAN ESPARZA](#)

BY [ALI JUNG](#)

COLUMBIA — When Christine Goyette moved from Germany to Jackson, Mo., in 2006, she knew one person: her husband.

"It was really hard for me to have left Germany and to come here not knowing anybody, and to basically start from ground zero," she said.

### Meetup.com groups

#### Columbia Law of Attraction Meetup Group

- 34 members
- [lawofattraction.meetup.com/776/](http://lawofattraction.meetup.com/776/)

#### Columbia Raw Food Meetup Group

- 72 members
- Organized by Jane Smith
- Phone: 875-8787

Goyette decided to take initiative, meet people and make friends in her new hometown.

"I knew when we moved I needed to find a different way. ... I did some research when we moved, trying to find a way to meet people in town and find something to do," she said.

She discovered [meetup.com](#), a Web site dedicated to interaction all over the world. Founded in 2002 in New York City, the social networking site allows people to locate others with common interests in their communities.

The goal is to revitalize the sense of community

- E-mail: jwsmith715@cs.com

- [meetup.com/Columbia-RawFood-Feasters/](http://meetup.com/Columbia-RawFood-Feasters/)

#### **1960s Chi Mu Fijis**

- 22 members
- Organized by John Putnam
- [reunion.meetup.com/68/](http://reunion.meetup.com/68/)

#### **Columbia Atheists**

- 47 members
- Organized by Greg Lammers
- Phone: 289-7633
- E-mail: [glaamers@atheists.org](mailto:glaamers@atheists.org)
- [meetup.com/The-Columbia-Atheists-Meetup-Group/](http://meetup.com/The-Columbia-Atheists-Meetup-Group/)

#### **Columbia Italian Language Meetup Group**

- 9 members
- Organized by James
- [meetup.com/The-Columbia-Italian-Language-Meetup-Group/](http://meetup.com/The-Columbia-Italian-Language-Meetup-Group/)

#### **Alpine Shop Outdoor Adventures**

- 28 members
- Organized by Brennan VanMatre
- [meetup.com/Alpine-Shop-Outdoor-Adventures/](http://meetup.com/Alpine-Shop-Outdoor-Adventures/)

#### **The Columbia Network Marketing Meetup Group For NUTRAZON**

- 1 member
- Organized by Mike Bell
- [meetup.com/The-Columbia-Network-Marketing-Meetup-Group-For-NUTRAZON/](http://meetup.com/The-Columbia-Network-Marketing-Meetup-Group-For-NUTRAZON/)

around the world using technology available to many people.

Three inventive Internet enthusiasts — Scott Heiferman, Matt Meeker and Peter Kamali — were inspired to create Meetup.com after reading Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone."

The 2000 book describes a nation of citizens who have disengaged from community interaction. Putnam, a Harvard political scientist, argued that Americans have backed away from voting, serving on committees and participating in other group activities.

Heiferman and his friends decided they could do something to change that, to give people a way to reconnect.

"Meetup is not about virtual relationships, but face-to-face, honest-to-goodness interaction between neighbors," the Web site states.

This is just what Goyette and millions of others around the world are a part of.

The site reaches more than 11,000 cities worldwide, with 5.7 million members participating in groups every week. More than 8,000 topics are available.

Columbia has 25 meetups on subjects that include the arts, business, hobbies, culture, health, education, technology, science and sports. There are places to discuss politics and religion, rubber stamping and raw food. There are groups for singles, dog lovers, Italian speakers, atheists, bikers and those who practice witchcraft.

Colleen Brown founded the Coffee and Games and More meetup in November. The group meets on Saturdays in a back room of It's a Grind to play Jenga, a game of stacking wooden blocks in towers.

"It is an activity that doesn't put too much pressure on someone in terms of requiring that they talk or interact with strangers," Brown said.

In January, Goyette founded a meetup group for fans of Byron Katie, and in March, she co-founded a walking and hiking group. Both had

**20's and 30's in CoMo**

- 25 members
- Organized by Sarah Wells-Morgan
- E-mail: s.wellsmorgan@gmail.com
- [meetup.com/20s-and-30s-in-CoMo/](http://meetup.com/20s-and-30s-in-CoMo/)

**Columbia Tennis Meetup Group**

- 10 members
- Organized by Wayne Blinne
- [meetup.com/Columbia-Tennis-Meetup-Group/](http://meetup.com/Columbia-Tennis-Meetup-Group/)

**Columbia Singles Meetup Group**

- 113 members
- Organized by Mark Potts
- E-mail: mep06369@yahoo.com
- [singles.meetup.com/2322/](http://singles.meetup.com/2322/)

**Columbia Dog Lovers Meetup Group**

- 151 members
- Organized by Kim
- [activedogs.meetup.com/98/](http://activedogs.meetup.com/98/)

**Boone County, MO:  
Libertarians and Campaign  
for Liberty**

- 99 members
- Organized by Glenn Nielson
- Phone: 777-7908
- E-mail: chair@boone.lpmo.org
- Web site: [boone.lpmo.org/](http://boone.lpmo.org/)
- [meetup.com/Boone-County-Missouri-libertarians/](http://meetup.com/Boone-County-Missouri-libertarians/)

immediate success in gaining membership, she said.

Additionally, she has joined six more groups, including a raw food collective and Coffee and Games and More.

They have become a source of both activity and interaction with real people in the community, she said.

"It is great to see people getting together outside of their homes to come together as strangers and really transform into a group," Goyette said.

Thursday, September 16, 2010

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## Let's get together

By Bonnie Bauman (Contact)

Monday, July 27, 2009

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When Cindy Bravata, who runs a home-based business as a Juice Plus representative, moved to Baton Rouge from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, she was looking for a way to network with other people who are self-employed. Twenty years ago, this might have posed a challenge. But, in the age of the Internet, it was simply a matter of logging on to Meetup.com and organizing the group herself.

Today, Bravata's group, the Baton Rouge Business Networking Meetup Group, boasts 41 members and meets an average of once a month at Capital Region restaurants to discuss such things as networking, business promotion strategies, client relations and improving presentation skills.

"It's a way to come together with a group of people who have the same mission of success that you have," says Kina O'Neal, assistant organizer of the Meetup.

Bravata's group is one of three focused on business or professional networking in Baton Rouge. While the number is small compared to that of larger cities—Los Angeles has 443 and New York City 746—observers say the number is sure to grow as the social-networking trend increases.

Indeed, small-business owners, entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals continue to represent the largest categories inside Meetup, says Andres Glusman, the vice president of insights and strategies at Meetup Inc.

"Anyone who has ever tried to run a small business or start a business as an entrepreneur knows that it's really, really hard to run a business," he says. "And what groups are finding is that it's beneficial to talk to others who are going through what they're going through and exchange ideas, leads and share information."

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**INTERNET SOLUTIONS** Cindy Bravata, who runs a home-based business as a Juice Plus representative, created a Meetup group called the Baton Rouge Business Networking Meetup Group, which boasts 41 members and meets an average of once a month at Capital Region restaurants.

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Launched in 2001, Meetup is a social-networking site that enables people who share common interests to find one another and organize face-to-face meetings at various locations around the world. In addition,

# LOOKING FOR A LITTLE EXTRA CASH?



Meetup.com allows groups to communicate with members in between meetings.

"The key idea with Meetup is that it basically gives people the power to self-organize into local groups around things that are important to them," Glusman says.

The variety of Meetup groups that exists today is seemingly endless. There are groups that focus on the environment, politics, parenting, food, wine, movies, hiking, reading, chess, Star Trek, entrepreneurship, real estate, Harry Potter, small business ownership, pets, religion, writing, nursing, health, fitness, fashion, organic gardening and clam chowder [fans of both New England and Manhattan clam chowders are welcome

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to attend meetings].

For its part, Baton Rouge has 47 Meetup groups that focus on a variety of interests, including a supper club, pug lovers' group, natural childbirth group, mommy's day out, tot play group, Spanish language group and the "Louisiana Society of Wiccans." There's even a Meetup focused on organizing and running a Meetup.

Of the roughly 60,000 Meetup groups around the globe, 14,000 are business-related, Glusman says. And that number is growing daily. Glusman believes the economic downturn is playing a role in that growth.

"In these tough economic times," he says, "People don't want to wait for other people to create solutions for them, so they're turning to each other and creating solutions for themselves."

In addition to joining a group to network and sharing business strategies and ideas, Meetup Inc. encourages businesses to reach out to groups that are related to their business and offer to become a "sponsor." For example, a pet supply business might offer to become a sponsor of a popular pet lovers' group.

"It's the same idea as a business offering to sponsor a little-league team," Glusman says. "It often creates a really strong way for businesses to develop much deeper relationships with people in their neighborhood."

Sponsors are invited to support local Meetup groups by providing anything from financial support to a place for their group to meet to samples of their products to distribute to members. In return, in addition to other tie-ins, groups can display the sponsor's logo on their Meetup pages. Meetup Inc. encourages interested sponsors to connect with the Meetups themselves and work out their own terms. If they want to sponsor 50 or more Meetups, they are invited to contact the Meetup headquarters in New York for help.

But, Glusman says, Meetup cautions group organizers to properly vet the potential sponsor's interest in the group and not allow them to inappropriately contact or spam their membership.

For its part, one of Baton Rouge's three business-related Meetups has quite a few sponsors. The group is called the Baton Rouge Film, TV, Theatre, and Music Industry Meetup Group, and is actually one of the more established business-related groups.

The group, which started in 2005, has 1,285 members and has held more than 90 meetings, is open to members who are employed in the film, television, theater and music industries. In addition to organizing in person meetings locally, the group, through e-mail blasts and its message board, announces casting calls, crew calls, classes, shows, screenings and openings of new, related businesses. It also posts newspaper articles about what productions are coming to town, what companies are hiring and what government is doing to protect its industries, among other things.

The third Baton Rouge business-related Meetup, the Baton Rouge Real Estate Investor Group, was organized in November 2008. This group, which to date is made up of 68 "aspiring real estate investors," promotes free training classes. According to its Meetup page, it's designed for "investors who are already doing deals and those who want to learn how to, as well as realtors, contractors, loan officers and others who provide real estate services."

### **GROUP SESSIONS**

*The types of number of Meetup groups in the Capital Region:*

#### **Group--Number of groups**

Hobbies--6

Parenting and family--6

Arts and entertainment--5

Social--5

Health and support--4

Business and career--3

Religion and beliefs--3

Communities and lifestyles--2

Politics and activism--2

Cultures and languages--1

Education--1

Internet and technology--1

Pets and animals--1

Sports and recreation--1

**Total--47**

*SOURCE: Meetup.com*

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## Funny Thing Happened at the Dog Run

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Photo: Bono photo by The New York Times

A gathering of Boston terrier owners in Manhattan was organized through Meetup.com. "It's fun for him, it's fun for us," said Karineh Gurjian-Angelo, who was there with Bono and other dogs.

By AMANDA M. FAIRBANKS  
Published August 23, 2008

To those who did not know, the two dozen or so Boston terriers and their owners who descended on Carl Schurz Park on the Upper East Side of Manhattan on a recent sunny Saturday afternoon seemed just a curious coincidence.

"We thought something must be happening," said Emily Warren, 12, who lives nearby and encountered the group during a regular walk with her father through the park, which sits along the East River. Their dog Max, a 2-year-old Boston terrier, happily commingled with his brethren.

In fact, it was a planned gathering of members of the New York Boston Terrier Meetup Group, which uses Meetup.com, a social networking Web site, to arrange for monthly excursions to dog runs around the city.

The terrier club, which claims 400 members, is just one example of how Meetup.com allows users with shared, sometimes eccentric, interests to move beyond interacting in the "virtual world" and actually meet in person. Within a 25-mile radius of Manhattan, for example, nearly 4,000 groups have formed on the site since 2002 — connecting table

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4. Maureen Dowd: Who's the Con Man?
5. Nicholas D. Kristof: A Boy and a Bicycle(s)
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tennis enthusiasts, birdwatchers and lovers of Rummikub, a board game.

Meetup.com was founded in 2002 by Scott Heiferman, who was running an online advertising agency. He believed that New Yorkers craved a greater sense of community after the 9/11 attack. The inspiration for the site was "Bowling Alone," a popular book by Robert D. Putnam, a Harvard political scientist, which chronicled the decline of American civic life.

"We believe in the power of self-organized groups to improve lives and even change the world," said Douglas Atkin, whose title at Meetup.com is chief community officer. "We build the software and get out of the way." Mr. Atkin himself is one of 28 members of the Brooklyn Beagle Brigade.

Promoting personal, real-life contact is one way Meetup.com, whose offices are in Lower Manhattan, differentiates itself from other popular social networking sites, like [Facebook.com](#) or [Myspace.com](#).

"There's no inherent reason why other Internet sites — or even pre-Internet — why quirky people couldn't get together to share their interest," said Thomas H. Sander, who runs the Project on Civic Engagement at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government with Professor Putnam.

"Meeting at a bar week after week or a dog run with dog owners increases the chance you'll form friendships," Mr. Sander said, who is intrigued by Meetup .com's combination of what he described as "high-tech and high-touch."

For most members of the Boston terrier group that Saturday, making friends seemed secondary to giving their pets a chance to frolic with fellow terriers.

"I know the names of the dogs better than the names of the people," said Karen Rogers, 36, whose 3-year-old terrier, Beanie, was her inspiration for forming the group. "When Beanie's playing with other Bostons, it's different because she can be herself and really roughhouse."

Ms. Rogers, who lives on the Upper West Side and works for an office furniture dealer, relies on Beanie's hot-pink harness to tell her apart from the pack.

The group is sustained by a devoted handful of terrier owners who show up every month for the play dates. For some it is a welcome chance to get off their computers and meet people face-to-face. One of the regulars, Karineh Gurjian-Angelo, a photographer, shows up with brindle-coated Bono. She lives in Queens, where, she said, well-maintained dog runs are difficult to find. "It's fun for him, it's fun for us. The rest of the time he has to be on a leash," she said.

Before Meetup.com, people tended to expand their social networks through church membership or neighborhood associations.

"If I move to New York and know no one and I'm a poodle owner or British expat or an animal lover, I can sign on to a Meetup and find a way of meeting people who share those interests even if I know no one in New York City," Mr. Sander said.



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James Jenkin, 38, was also at the park with his partner, Shannon Cane, and their dogs. Both men recently moved to Brooklyn from Australia and have gone to the last three Boston terrier gatherings. "The phenomenon of being able to see 20 to 30 Bostons at a time is part of the appeal," Mr. Jenkin said. "Maybe making friends will happen the longer you come to these things."

But Danielle Bufalini, 29, deputy editor of Daily Candy, an online newsletter, who was at the same play date, was a little wary of going, so she brought along two friends. All sat huddled together on rocks in the middle of the pebble-covered dog run.

"I'm not going to Meetup without anyone else," said Ms. Bufalini, whose Boston terrier, Huck, was content to socialize. "It seems strange to be that dog-crazy."

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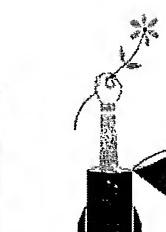
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November 24, 2009

## Let's meet up

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

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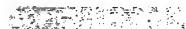


A biking trip to Bangalore by Hyd clubbers and backpacking group.

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*Clubbing, adventure, travel, yoga, salsa or sharing notes on your iPhone, there are online meet-up groups for every activity carried out offline, finds Sangeetha Devi Dundoo*



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On November 28, a group of adventure enthusiasts will assemble at 6.30 a.m. and trek up the Moula Ali Hill. Weekend, for these professionals who are part of the Greater Hyderabad Adventure Club, is time to unwind with adventure. The GHAC, founded in May 2008 by Diyanat Ali, is a 700-members group today. Diyanat is an adventure enthusiast who has been trekking since 2000. "It was a small group earlier," he shares. He expanded the horizon on meetup.com, found like-minded people who would take part in treks, river rafting and mountain climbing. The largest expedition till date is the Mt. Everest base camp trek. The GHAC, like other groups listed on meetup.com, taps social networking sites, Twitter, YouTube and word-of-mouth publicity to draw more members.

Hyderabad has nearly 30 meet-up groups on interests as different as salsa, metaphysics and i-phone. The groups have helped out-of-towners who've moved into Hyderabad to find people sharing common interests. Sachin Verma, who floated the Hyderabad Clubbers and Backpacking group, is an example. Working for an IT major, he moved from Delhi to Hyderabad last December and

missed having an active social life. "I then came across meet-up groups and signed up for a few. Zeroing in on my interest, I started this group two months ago. The club has 35 members," he says. The description of the group says it all: clubbing, socialising and networking... fun is complimentary.

In reality, the group does more than networking and having fun. A few members went on a bike trip to Bangalore, had informal music sessions and visited a school for underprivileged children. "We plan meets on themes and the next one is for people interested in start-up ventures. Dance, adventure sports, community service and other topics are being planned. By the end of the year, we plan to organise holidays to Bangkok, Leh and Kashmir," says Sachin.

Joining a meet-up group is simple. Identify a group or begin a group on meetup.com, join as a member and you are on the mailing list of the group. Privacy settings ensure that your email id or contact details are not shared with others. Groups use free sms through Google to send out alerts to members. Groups meet daily, weekly or fortnightly. The meet-up calendars alert you about the next session of yoga, salsa or walk at the KBR Park.

On a different plane, there are groups such as the Yoga, Meditation and Spirituality and the Metaphysical groups. Dr. D.S. Deb, a neurologist, founded the Metaphysical group to help people share their spiritual experiences. "Years of experience as a neurologist has taught me that there is more than just medicine to treat patients. I wanted to share these experiences," says Dr. Deb. The group, founded in July, has 75 members.

The advantage of having meet-up groups, says Salil Ganeriwal who started the Yoga, Meditation and Spirituality group, lies in finding new people who connect for a reason: "Within two months we have 44 members and all of them are people I didn't know before."

#### Other meet-up groups

Hyderabad Fun Travellers group has planned a drive and hike trip to Nagarjunsagar this weekend.

Salsa group, founded by salsa instructor Rishikesh Chhabra, is for those interested in different dance forms. The group meets every Sunday.

Hyderabad Bicycling Club organises bicycle trips for beginners and regular bikers.

Keywords: online meet-up groups, Clubbing, adventure, travel, yoga, salsa



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# THE VANCOUVER COURIER

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## Trekkie to teach Klingon language Animation student speaks phonetic Klingonese

BY SANDRA THOMAS, VANCOUVER COURIER WEDNESDAY AUGUST 11, 2009

STORY PHOTOS ( 1 )



Sitting in a coffee shop at the corner of Broadway and Manitoba Street Monday afternoon, none of the patrons blink an eye at Charles Bae's yellow Star Trek uniform shirt, or even his replica ray gun.

It's not until the Collingwood resident

begins to sing a chorus of the Klingon national anthem, in Klingonese, that the woman behind him puts down her newspaper and looks over.

"Koi keh-less pook load. Koi Pook beh poo. Yoch bow math bow je shuv wee. Say moach chyu may ew. Mah shoov, mah nong..." Bae sings.

Bae explains he speaks and sings Klingonese phonetically, which is how he intends to teach the language. Klingons are the warrior villains from the fictional Star Trek universe. The 36-year-old has started a Star Trek Klingon language "meetup" group, through which he hopes to share his skills in Klingonese. Meetup groups are arranged through an online website, meetup.com, dedicated to bringing people of similar interests together.

"I always thought it was such a shame no one was teaching Klingonese locally," said Bae. "But when I checked [meetup.com] there were 12 people here who wanted to learn. So I decided, why not?"

The self-described "Trekkie" said there are only 1,000 people in the world who speak fluent Klingonese, a language created in the early 1990s by University of California linguist Marc Okrand for Paramount Pictures for use in several Star Trek sequels. Okrand published an official Klingon dictionary in 1992. "I know the translations of all of the Klingonese in all of the movies," said Bae. "But I'm still learning to speak it all fluently."

When the Courier asked Bae to speak a common Klingon phrase, he

Trekkie to teach Klingon language

instantly offered up the Klingonese words for "Beam me up." He added

Klingonese is just one of several languages he speaks, including

Hebrew, French, Romanian, Russian, Arabic and Korean.

Born in Canada, Bae was never taught to speak Korean, his parent's native language. But several years ago he went to Korea to teach English as a second language and as a result learned Korean. In a surprise twist, his new language skills landed him a job as a game show host on Korean TV, as well as a three-year gig as an on-air radio pundit. Upon his return to Canada, Bae began classes in 3-D animation at the Pacific Audio Visual Institute near Broadway and Main Street, which he'll complete in September.

Bae said as a six-year-old child watching his parent's 21-inch Sony, he assumed Star Trek was real.

"I thought the Starship Enterprise was a real place," said Bae, who 30-years later is still a huge fan of everything Star Trek. "I used to think, 'Poor Captain Kirk,' because he was always getting beaten up."

Bae's dream is to meet actor William Shatner, the actor who played Capt. James T. Kirk in the original 1960s series and who remains a popular cult icon today.

"I'd love to meet William Shatner and do one of my Captain Kirk impressions for him," Bae said.

Urged on by the Courier, Bae holds his arms up in a classic Kirk gesture and begins to speak in the captain's trademark halting style.

"You Klingon bastard, you killed my son. You Klingon bastard," Bae said passionately, as the woman with the newspaper sitting behind him really starts to pay attention.

Any Star Trek fans interested in learning Klingon can reach Bae through <http://startrek.meetup.com/cities/ca/bc/vancouver>.

sithomas@vancourier.com

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# EXHIBIT C

# Newsweek

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## DEAN'S NET EFFECT IS JUST THE START

For many of us, Howard Dean's bid for the white house is already fading into the wonkier recesses of our brains, the famous scream taking its place in politics-junkie lore with Mike Dukakis's tank ride and Ed Muskie's tears. The only remaining question in this saga involves the campaign's innovative use of the Internet for community building, policy positioning and raising money. Considering the campaign's January cliff dive, one might reasonably ask whether this megapublicized phenomenon was overhyped.

A portion of the punditry can't resist comparing the campaign to the tech boom of the '90s--an overinflated bubble that left its naive believers drenched in soap scum.

Try telling that to the architect of Dean's strategy, campaign manager Joe Trippi. "It wasn't a dot-com bust," he insists. "It was a dot-com *miracle*." Point taken. It was only through the Internet that an obscure former governor raised more bucks than a pack of better-known heavy hitters. It was only through the Internet that a new force in politics--impassioned Web logs by overcaffeinated advocates--was able to penetrate Big Media's immune system and spread the word through the hustings. It was only through the Internet, specifically by way of the groundbreaking service Meetup.com, that self-organizing groups of Deansters were able to hold thousands of gatherings around the country. The Internet provided Howard Dean with an amazing launchpad, and if there was any fault, we can look to the candidate's inexperience in the big-time-politics equivalent of rocket science. As tech observer Esther Dyson noted at a conference on digital politics recently, "The best way to kill a bad product is with good advertising."

In retrospect, we'll come to view Dean's Internet boost as less a miracle than an inevitability. To say that the marriage of politics and the Net wouldn't have happened without Dean or Trippi is like saying that without the Kennedy-Nixon debates, television would not have dominated campaigning for the last 40 years. Someone else would have exploited the fact that this most powerful of media is now nearly ubiquitous, and future campaigns are going to come up with even more sophisticated ways to use the Net. "People will look back

on the Dean campaign and say, 'What a primitive thing,'" says Trippi.

In the short term, the Internet will continue to be a factor in the current election; Dean himself pledged last week to move his Web operations toward the twin goals of beating George W. Bush and promoting the issues that were part of his run. Trippi had already decided to begin a Web-based grass-roots movement to push liberal issues. This puts both men in line with the successful MoveOn.org operation, an Internet-centered, Berkeley, Calif.-based group that's going to spend millions this year to try to unseat the incumbent president.

All this is strong stuff, but I anticipate an even more powerful revolution to come when the disruptive grass-roots power of the Net is corralled not in elections but in *governing*. The Internet makes it possible to mobilize no-longer-silent majorities, who will make their voices heard in the same way that a measly 600,000 Net supporters did for Howard Dean. Trippi says that the idea is something the Dean forces never had time to articulate, but he is rapturous about the possibilities. "If you ever had millions of Americans in concert with a president who's talking about health care, or real campaign-finance reform, he could say, 'I'm going to bring up this bill--send all the lobbyists away because the American people are going to come screaming in!'"

Imagine if a national leader decided to grab this tiger's tail in an effort to bring affordable health care to the millions of uninsured families. He or she could launch a multipronged cyberassault on the special interests, fueled by the passion and desperation of millions of citizens who are either fed up with their health plans or panicked because they can't pay for one. Bloggers would spread sob stories. Legislators would be flooded with real e-mails from real constituents. Instant-response e-mails and postings could quickly refute fearmongering ads. Maybe, just maybe, a chronically intractable national crisis could be resolved.

The prospect is so delicious that I decided to venture onto the Web myself and pluck down 19 bucks to reserve a new domain name: [healthcareforallamericans.org](http://healthcareforallamericans.org). I vow to turn over the name to the first president with the savvy and commitment to work the next miracle in politics and the Internet.

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## Meetup wants to be Facebook for the real world

August 17, 2010 1:45 PM

**The social networking site is expanding beyond its web domain by introducing widgets to encourage impromptu meet ups. The media shy CEO explains his strategy to Fortune.**

*Interview by Alex Kantrowitz, contributor*

See those Facebook "Like" buttons all over the web? If Meetup CEO Scott Heiferman has his way, his Meetup Everywhere buttons will be next. The New York-based social networking site, which currently has around 79,000 groups of people with common interests that, well, meet up, recently launched Meetup Everywhere, a widget that can be embedded into any web page, enabling visitors to plan meetups around the topics they're reading about.

While just released two months ago, Meetup Everywhere is taking off fast. It is already in use by the Huffington Post, Mashable, Foursquare, Tech Crunch and, just last week, YouTube joined up. Yes, it's possible to meet up to discuss OMG cat.

The Huffington Post, one of the earliest adopters, asked its readers to meet and talk about the Gulf Oil spill early in June. Since that posting, 1,812 people in 25 countries have taken part in 439 Meetups, all centered around brainstorming and taking action to help blunt the spill's impact.



Meetup CEO Scott Heiferman usually works from behind the scenes, but he recently sat down with *Fortune* to discuss Meetup Everywhere and how it fits into his company's ultimate goal: "a meetup everywhere about most everything."

### How far integrated into everyday life do you think Meetup Everywhere can actually become?

Anything in the world can be a stimulus for a meet up. And it should be. It seems like an inevitable part of the future. If there's something that you're fired up about that you just read in the paper, whether Nicholas Kristof or Rachel Maddow or Glenn Beck are writing about it, there should be a concentration of twelve people within two blocks of you who really want to have a conversation about it, and are willing to do so tomorrow during lunch hour. That's where we want to see the world go.

### How did you test Meetup Everywhere? Did you use focus groups or other market research?

We built Meetup Everywhere with absolutely nothing written down. There was no product spec, no mock-up, no strategy document. Absolutely nothing was written on paper or on screen about what this thing is, or what it's going to be, or how we're going to do it, or why we're going to do it, or how we should do it. It just sort of naturally evolved out of conversations here, and our VP of

engineering, Gary Burns, just started hacking it up one day, and we said, "let's do this." No focus groups or anything. It does seem funny to me that we have something that we think could really be transformative in so many ways and there's not a paragraph written about it internally.

**You realize you're trying to spur some serious behavioral change with Meetup Everywhere. How do you expect to overcome the challenges that come along with trying to get people to change the way they live their lives?**

I've got tens of thousands of years of human evolution and behavior behind me to say that people like the idea of real life, face-to-face conversation about something that's important to them. I'm not trying to bring in this whole new behavior. I'm trying to bring in a behavior that throughout human history has come pretty natural. That said, it's definitely a shift.

The behavior of saying your customers may want to meet up with each other and talk about your product or service, in a culture where we're just hermetically sealed in our homes and we're scared of strangers, that sounds crazy. But that's going to be the future.

**Meetup has no public relations team and you've been known to generally avoid media attention. Why are you sitting here now?**

The idea is have it [Meetup] be a great product. And as people use it, they will come to see it and understand it, and eventually they will want to use it at their own organizations or their own companies. We've been really lucky in having great initial launch partners and, as you see other ones come through, it's coming from people at those organizations having experienced it and bringing it back to their own organization.

That said, we are still not having a PR department, but for the first time ever, I've had to change my opinion and change course.

What we've realized is that, in the case of Meetup Everywhere, where its organizations, businesses, non profits using it, they really do have a lot of questions and it is so non-intuitive. I'm here because we want people to understand Meetup Everywhere.

**Do you think that Meetup has reached a growth ceiling?**

We haven't even hit our tipping point yet. We have not scratched the surface of what's possible, in fact, Meetup Everywhere gave us this awesome wake-up call. If the Huffington Post can put a little link somewhere and see all these meetups pop up, if authors can post on their blog that their readers should meet up with each other, if a business can do this simple nudge for people to meet up, and people want to meet up, what it tells us is that there's a lot more potential for Meetup in general than we've seen so far.

**Ten years down the road, what will Meetup look like?**

Could there be a company that has a footprint of serving a billion people with only 200 people on staff? That would be ideal.

Tags: social networking, meetup, scott heiferman, meetup everywhere, huffington post

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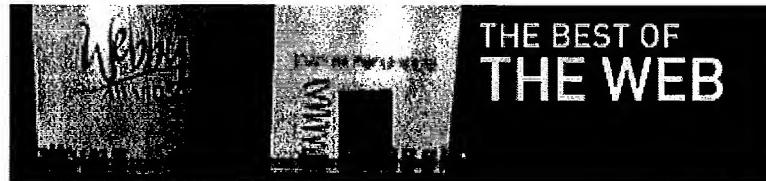
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## NOMINEES

› Brisbane City Council	<a href="http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/">http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/</a>
› FedStats	<a href="http://www.fedstats.gov">http://www.fedstats.gov</a>

- HealthyOntario.com <http://www.healthyontario.com>
  - The Scottish Parliament <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk>
  - Washington State Public Disclosure Commission <http://www.pdc.wa.gov/>
- 

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## HEALTH

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| WEBBY AWARD WINNER   | PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER   |
| KidsHealth<br><a href="http://www.KidsHealth.org">KidsHealth.org</a> | cancerfacts.com<br><a href="http://www.cancerfacts.com">www.cancerfacts.com</a> |

NOMINEES

- Black Women's Health Imperative <http://www.BlackWomensHealth.org>
  - cancerfacts.com <http://www.cancerfacts.com/>
  - HIVSTOPSWITHME <http://www.hivstopswithme.org>
  - KidsHealth <http://KidsHealth.org>
  - teenwire <http://www.teenwire.com/>
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## HUMOR

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| WEBBY AWARD WINNER  | PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER   |
| The Onion<br><a href="http://www.theonion.com">www.theonion.com</a> | The Onion<br><a href="http://www.theonion.com">www.theonion.com</a> |

NOMINEES

- Engrish.com <http://www.engrish.com>
  - Modern Humorist <http://www.modernhumorist.com>
  - Red vs. Blue <http://www.redvsblue.com/>
  - The Onion <http://www.theonion.com>
  - WHITEHOUSE.ORG <http://www.whitehouse.org>
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## LIVING

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| WEBBY AWARD WINNER   | PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER  |
| Epicurious.com<br><a href="http://www.epicurious.com">www.epicurious.com</a> | Epicurious.com<br><a href="http://www.epicurious.com">www.epicurious.com</a> |

NOMINEES

- DIYnetwork.com <http://diynetwork.com>
  - Epicurious.com <http://www.epicurious.com>
  - Food Network <http://www.foodnetwork.com>
  - GoCityKids <http://gocitykids.com>
  - Readymade <http://www.readymademag.com/>
- 

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## MUSIC

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| WEBBY AWARD WINNER   | PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER  |
| iTunes Music Store<br><a href="http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/">www.apple.com/itunes/store/</a> | iTunes Music Store<br><a href="http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/">www.apple.com/itunes/store/</a> |

NOMINEES

- BeatPort <http://www.beatport.com>
- Bleep <http://www.bleep.com>
- iTunes Music Store <http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/>
- Live365 - The World's <http://www.live365.com>

Largest Internet Radio  
Network  
» musicplasma <http://www.musicplasma.com/>

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## NET ART

WEBBY AWARD WINNER

Access  
[www.accessproject.net/](http://www.accessproject.net/)

PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Gravity  
[art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/GRAVITY/](http://art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/GRAVITY/)

NOMINEES

» Access <http://www.accessproject.net/>  
» communimage <http://www.communimage.ch/engl/>  
» Gravity <http://art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/GRAVITY/>  
» Uncle Roy All Around You <http://www.uncleroyallaroundyou.co.uk/>  
» velvet-strike <http://www.opensorcery.net/velvet-strike/>

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## NEWS

WEBBY AWARD WINNER

BBC News  
[www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)

PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

TheSmokingGun  
[thesmokinggun.com](http://thesmokinggun.com)

NOMINEES

» Aljazeera.Net <http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>  
» BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>  
» NationalGeographic.com News <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/news>  
» RocketNews <http://www.rocketnews.com>  
» TheSmokingGun <http://thesmokinggun.com>

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## PERSONAL

WEBBY AWARD WINNER

RAKU-GAKI.COM  
[www.raku-gaki.com/](http://www.raku-gaki.com/)

PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

This is our son, so far  
[www.steveandria.com/kynan](http://www.steveandria.com/kynan)

NOMINEES

» Brukoworld <http://www.brukoworld.com>  
» Ggreg.com <http://www.ggreg.com>  
» Jeff Harris <http://www.jeffharris.org>  
» RAKU-GAKI.COM <http://www.raku-gaki.com/>  
» This is our son, so far <http://www.steveandria.com/kynan>

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## POLITICS

WEBBY AWARD WINNER

Meetup  
[www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Blog for America  
[blogforamerica.com](http://blogforamerica.com)

NOMINEES

» Blog for America <http://blogforamerica.com>  
» Center for Responsive Politics <http://www.opensecrets.org>  
» Electronic Frontier Foundation <http://www.eff.org/>  
» Meetup <http://www.meetup.com>

› NYTimes.com Political Campaigns <http://www.nytimes.com/campaigns>

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## PRINT + ZINES

### WEBBY AWARD WINNER

{fray}  
[www.fray.com](http://www.fray.com)

### PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

National Geographic: Online Edition  
[www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine)

### NOMINEES

- › AlterNet <http://www.alternet.org>
- › Mother Jones magazine <http://www.motherjones.com>
- › National Geographic: Online Edition <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine>
- › Nerve <http://www.nerve.com>
- › {fray} <http://www.fray.com>

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## RADIO

### WEBBY AWARD WINNER

KEXP Radio Online  
[www.kexp.org](http://www.kexp.org)

### PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Live365 - The World's Largest Internet Radio Network  
[www.live365.com](http://www.live365.com)

### NOMINEES

- › KEXP Radio Online <http://www.kexp.org>
- › Live365 - The World's Largest Internet Radio Network <http://www.live365.com>
- › Public Radio Exchange <http://www.prx.org>
- › PublicRadioFan.com <http://www.publicradiofan.com>
- › WTOP Radio <http://www.wtopnews.com/>

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## SCIENCE

### WEBBY AWARD WINNER

Exploratorium  
[www.exploratorium.edu/](http://www.exploratorium.edu/)

### PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

How Stuff Works  
[www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com)

### NOMINEES

- › BBC - Science & Nature <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/>
- › Edheads Virtual Knee Surgery <http://www.edheads.org/activities/knee/>
- › Exploratorium <http://www.exploratorium.edu/>
- › How Stuff Works <http://www.howstuffworks.com>
- › Hubble Space Telescope <http://www.hubblesite.org>

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## SERVICES

### WEBBY AWARD WINNER

Google  
[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

### PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Google  
[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

### NOMINEES

- › Google <http://www.google.com>
- › Gracenote CDB <http://www.gracenote.com/music>

‣ iTunes Music Store	<a href="http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/shop.html">http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/shop.html</a>
‣ Meetup	<a href="http://www.meetup.com">http://www.meetup.com</a>
‣ MIT OpenCourseWare	<a href="http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html">http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html</a>

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## SPIRITUALITY

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## WEBBY AWARD WINNER

GraceCathedral.org  
[www.GraceCathedral.org](http://www.GraceCathedral.org)

## PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

beliefnet  
[www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)

## NOMINEES

- Ashrei- Happy, Blessed <http://www.ashrei.com>
- beliefnet <http://www.beliefnet.com>
- GraceCathedral.org <http://www.GraceCathedral.org>
- My Hero --Heroes of Faith [http://www.myhero.com/faith/faith\\_content.asp](http://www.myhero.com/faith/faith_content.asp)
- MyJewishLearning.com <http://www.myjewishlearning.com>

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## SPORTS

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## WEBBY AWARD WINNER

BBC Sport  
[news.bbc.co.uk/sport/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport/)

## PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

ESPN.com  
[www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com)

## NOMINEES

- BBC Sport <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport/>
- ESPN.com <http://www.espn.com>
- eteamz <http://www.eteamz.com/company/sites/finder/>
- NASCAR.COM's TrackPass with PitCommand <http://www.nascar.com/multimedia/about/>
- Streetplay.com <http://www.streetplay.com/>

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## TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT

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## WEBBY AWARD WINNER

Map24  
[www.map24.com](http://www.map24.com)

## PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Map24  
[www.map24.com](http://www.map24.com)

## NOMINEES

- Everything2 <http://www.everything2.com>
- Grid Technology <http://gridcafe.web.cern.ch/gridcafe/>
- Map24 <http://www.map24.com>
- teoma.com <http://www.teoma.com>
- Unihan Database <http://www.unicode.org/charts/unihan.html>

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## TRAVEL

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## WEBBY AWARD WINNER

IgoUgo  
[www.igougo.com](http://www.igougo.com)

## PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER

Lonely Planet Online  
[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

## NOMINEES

- Fodors.com <http://www.fodors.com>
- IgoUgo <http://www.igougo.com>
- LonelyPlanet.com <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>
- LuxuryLink.com <http://www.luxurylink.com>
- Pure NZ <http://www.newzealand.com>

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## TV

**WEBBY AWARD WINNER**

PBS.org  
[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

**PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER**

HistoryChannel.com  
[www.HistoryChannel.com](http://www.HistoryChannel.com)

**NOMINEES**

- FRONTLINE World <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld>
- HistoryChannel.com <http://www.HistoryChannel.com>
- Home and Garden Television <http://www.hgtv.com/>
- Noggin <http://www.noggin.com>
- PBS.org <http://www.pbs.org>

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## WEIRD

**WEBBY AWARD WINNER**

Car Stuck Girls  
[www.carstuckgirls.com](http://www.carstuckgirls.com)

**PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER**

Car Stuck Girls  
[www.carstuckgirls.com](http://www.carstuckgirls.com)

**NOMINEES**

- A Portrait of You and Stevie Nicks <http://www.johannas-art.com/Portraits.htm>
- Car Stuck Girls <http://www.carstuckgirls.com>
- Cliff Pickover's Reality Carnival <http://www.realitycarnival.com>
- Fortean Times <http://www.forteantimes.com/>
- weirdomusic.com <http://weirdomusic.com>

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## YOUTH

**WEBBY AWARD WINNER**

WIRETAP  
[www.wiretappmag.org](http://www.wiretappmag.org)

**PEOPLE'S VOICE WINNER**

PBS Kids Online  
[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)

**NOMINEES**

- Arthur <http://pbskids.org/arthur>
- Listen Up! <http://www.listenup.org>
- PBS Kids Online <http://www.pbskids.org>
- The Fin, Fur and Feather Bureau of Investigation <http://www.ffffbi.com>
- WIRETAP <http://www.wiretappmag.org>

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Sites are evaluated based on Academy set criteria (content, structure & navigation, visual design, interactivity, functionality and overall experience), as well as the panels own definition

# Innovator of the Year: Scott Heiferman

CEO of Meetup.com pioneered the disruptive idea of going online to go offline

By Neil Savage

SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

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In a season when bloggers, Internet polling, and online donations are reshaping presidential politics, the man who created one of the first Web services to emerge during the Democratic primaries has been named *Technology Review's* Innovator of the Year for 2004.

Scott Heiferman, 32, is cofounder and CEO of Meetup.com, a site dedicated, he says, to going online to go offline. Meetup provides software and a database that allows people with common interests to organize themselves, bringing together people devoted to everything from flying kites (nine groups with 13 members as of September 29) to electing John Kerry president (834 groups, 136,619 members).

Heiferman's quest is to use technology to bring back some of the human-to-human interactions that have fallen by the wayside with the slow disappearance of such social groups as Elks Clubs and bowling leagues. He says he was inspired by the events of September 11 to try and build community among alienated Americans.

Accepting the award in MIT's Kresge Auditorium Wednesday evening, Heiferman said credit for Meetup's innovation should also go to the company's two other cofounders, Peter Kamali, Meetup's chief technology officer, and Matt Meeker, vice president of member experience. But he stressed that what's really innovative about Meetup.com is what users do with it. Holding up the award, he said, This really is for the people who are using Meetup innovatively and organizing things in their communities.

In an interview afterward, Heiferman said he was shocked by the recognition. My partners and I weren't the big stars, we just built the stage for other people, he said.

But *Technology Review* editor in chief Jason Pontin said the judges for the award found Heiferman's work genuinely innovative, and also felt it will serve as a lesson to future innovators. What we found striking about Scott was the swiftness of his influence and how genuinely disruptive his idea was, Pontin said.

Pontin cited the way Howard Dean gained momentum as an early contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in part because his supporters used Meetup as an organizing tool. In the months before the Iowa caucuses, about 190,000 people were using the website to get together with fellow Dean supporters. What was interesting about the Dean insurgency is that it really was grassroots.

Heiferman was one of 100 people under age 35 named the world's top young innovators by *Technology Review*. The Innovator of the Year award was presented during the Emerging Technologies Conference, sponsored by the magazine.

During a panel discussion at the conference with three other TR100 winners, Heiferman said Meetup.com is disruptive because it provides a powerful tool for users to organize themselves around any issue that interests them. From civil rights to womens rights to all kinds of rights, when people get organized they have all kinds of power, he said.

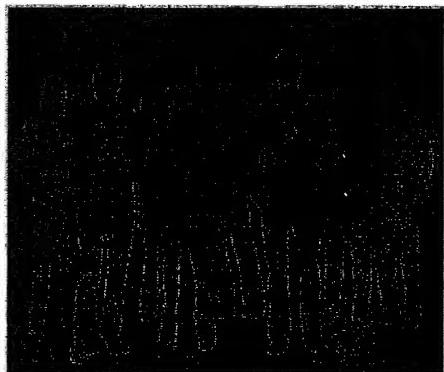
One audience member stood during a question and answer period to say he had gone online during the panel discussion and signed up for a Meetup group in California that discusses biology. Another audience member asked the panelists how to encourage children to grow up thinking innovatively.

Youve got to be really good at math and science to innovate, but too much math and science doesnt leave room for creativity, Heiferman responded. Goofing around is really important.

To use Meetup.com, people sign up at the website, indicating where they live and what topics theyre interested in. When a certain number of like-minded people in the same area have registered, the site announces a meeting. The meetings can happen anywhere; in a restaurant, bar, local library, or private home. Restaurants and the like can sign up to be venues for events. And to assure things run smoothly, the company just added the role of local organizer, so that one of the volunteers makes sure meetings run smoothly.

Story continues below

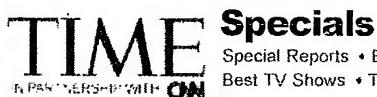
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Meetups cover a wide range of topics, all according to user interest. There are the Trekkies, of course (254 groups, 2,401 members), but theyre outnumbered by Bill OReilly fans (277 groups, 5,731 members). There are people who drive Mustangs (211 groups, 809 members) and people who read Ayn Rand (126 groups, 646 members). More than 10,000 users signed up for Republican Party groups, more than 67,000 signed up for Democratic Party meetups, and almost 5,000 want to support Ralph Nader in 2004.

Panel moderator Robert Metcalfe, the inventor of Ethernet and now a venture capitalist, joked about the sites use for political purposes. My wife and I have used Meetup for a gathering of both Republicans in Massachusetts, he said.

:



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Best TV Shows • Top 10 • ALL Time 100

# 50 Best Websites of 2004

*First, a caveat. This is not a directory of the 50 greatest websites ever. Rather, it's a tally of the best sites launched — or piqued our interest in some way — since last year's list. Think of it as our round-up of 50 nifty links we think you should check out. So get clicking!*

## Full List

### NEWS & INFORMATION

- Nationalgeographic.com/education
- BBC.co.uk
- Bloglines.com
- eHow.com
- ET.tv.yahoo.com
- Factcheck.org
- Fedstats.gov
- News.google.com
- PBS.org/pov/borders
- SEC.gov
- SSA.gov/OACT/babynames

### LIFESTYLE & CULTURE

- Apple.com/itunes/store/
- Cancerfacts.com
- Engadget
- FFFBI.com
- Freshdirect.com
- Kidshealth.org
- Metacritic.com
- Mojam.com
- Noggin.com
- Talkingpointsmemo.com
- Wordswithoutborders.com
- Yoox.com

### COMMUNITIES

- Triggerstreet.com
- Tolerance.org
- Sittercity.com
- Meetup.com
- iPodlounge.com

- Freecycle.org
- Friendster.com
- Craigslist.com

**TOOLS & ESSENTIALS**

- Testmyspeed.com
- Researchbuzz.org
- Refdesk.com
- Photos.yahoo.com
- Mobissimo.com
- Maps.yahoo.com
- Local.google.com
- JiWire.com
- Froogle.com
- Freetranslation.com
- A9.com

**JUST FOR FUN**

- Accessproject.com
- Comedycentral.com
- eBay.com
- Newseum.org/newsmania
- Puzzlepirates.com
- Sonyclassics.com/badass
- There.com
- Trevorvanmeter.com/flyguy

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TECHNOLOGY

## eBay's Affinity for Meetup.com

The online auctioneer has a lot in common with the virtual community site, so it took a nibble

The online auction colossus has caught a dose of community activism. On Mar. 9, eBay (**EBAY**) joined five other investors to purchase a minority share in community Web site Meetup.com

### STORY TOOLS

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-  [E-Mail This Story](#)
-  [Reader Comments](#)

### INSTANT SURVEY

With which of the following statements on outsourcing do you most agree?

- The benefits of outsourcing to corporate America far outweigh the costs
- There's an even split between the drawbacks and rewards
- Any benefits are overshadowed by the loss of U.S. jobs
- Unsure

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### PERSONAL SEARCH

Search for business contacts:

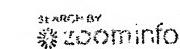
First Name :

Last Name :

Company Name :

**GO**

**PREMIUM SEARCH**  
Search by job title,  
geography and build a  
list of executive contacts

SEARCH BY  
 [eBay.info](#)

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The investment will total just more than 10% equity interest in Meetup.com, which connects folks to affinity groups like stay-at-home moms or Chihuahua lovers for offline gatherings. Although the companies refuse to reveal the dollar value, estimates put the investment -- in which eBay is joined by Omidyar Network, Draper Fisher Jurvetson, Esther Dyson, Allen & Co., and Senator Bill Bradley -- at less than \$1C million.

The investment makes sense for eBay as it continues to focus on building communities, says spokesperson Hani Durzy. "You would never be able to separate the community from the commerce on eBay," he says.

**LOTS OF OVERLAP.** Also, eBay is looking to connect to more consumers locally. To that end, Durzy says there is already significant overlap in users. He points to a Dallas Meetup group formed for folks who sell on eBay. Says Durzy, "We see a similarity in philosophy."

Indeed, Meetup plans to use a portion of the investment to launch six conferences across the country not so dissimilar from the eBay Live conference the company holds annually to bring sellers together. Says Scott Heiferman, "We want to help organizers become great leaders." The first Meetup conference will happen in Houston in May.

Also, Meetup will use its new resources to launch an advertising campaign to draw attention to local groups. The first Meetup posters will hit New York City subways on Mar. 24, says Heiferman.

**DEAN'S SOAPBOX.** Founded in 2002, Meetup first gained national attention for

## eBay's Affinity for Meetup.com

launching Howard Dean's brief Presidential candidacy during the 2004 elections. The site had 54,000 Meetup groups listed last May, when it began charging a small subscription fee of up to \$19 monthly to sponsor the groups. Since then the number of groups has dropped to just over 10,000, but more members have begun attending meetings.

"Members are more active because the quality of the groups has improved," says Heiferman.

In addition to large recent acquisitions such as Internet phone provider Skype.com, eBay has purchased minority stakes in other Web sites as an effort to learn about new forms of community-building. In August, 2004, the company purchased a 25% stake in online-classifieds site Craigslist.org. The company also has a minority stake in MercadoLibre.com, an eBay-like auction Web site in Latin America.

Pierre Omidyar, eBay's founder, already holds a seat on Meetup's board. "My belief that business can be a tool for social good is validated by eBay and Meetup's ability to connect people over shared interests through a for-profit model," he said in a statement.

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By Jessi Hempel